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BRIEF TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION FOR ONTARIO

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A Community College for the Ottawa Region

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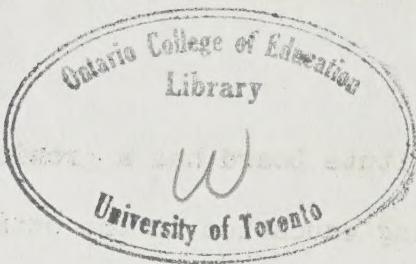
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The Collegiate Institute Board of Ottawa commends the action of the Minister of Education in bringing forward at this time legislation which will enable many communities in Ontario to develop much needed institutions for continuing education.

These new institutions face challenging times. Their potential may best be realized if they are encouraged from the outset to formulate an identity of their own; to find a basic frame of reference responding to long-term rather than short-term social objectives; to seek educational patterns and methods best suited to their goals; and to see educational opportunity for everyman in a new and imaginative light.

The Collegiate Institute Board has a growing concern for the provision of opportunities for continuing education in the Ottawa community. In addition to an evening programme enrolling more than 11,000 adult students, and a Canadian Vocational Training School of approximately 700, this Board has been involved in a number of fine relationships with community organizations resulting in increased opportunities for parent and family-life education, youth leadership, recreation opportunities through community councils, and the like. In co-operation with your Department we sponsor and administer the Small Business Management Programme throughout the Eastern Ontario Region.

Encouraged by your Department, our Board has taken further steps to develop its programmes of continuing education through the appointment of a very active Advisory Committee on Continuing Education representing the business, industrial, governmental, and voluntary sectors of the community. This Advisory Committee and the Collegiate Institute Board feel keenly a responsibility to the Ottawa community for the provision of adequate and well-designed continuing



education opportunities in this area. We feel that opportunities must be provided to meet the long-range, as well as the short-range needs of the community.

BASIC CONCEPTS:

1. Community Colleges in Ontario should not be bound by the set patterns of presently existing institutions of public education, but, rather, should be specifically designed to meet the needs of potential learners in each community. It follows that the concept and pattern of each College should differ to the extent that the resources and needs of each community are different. For example, the Ottawa community is more bilingual and more bicultural than many other Ontario communities. We would, therefore, expect that a new College here would reflect this aspect of community life throughout its structure and function. This brief assumes equal opportunity provided by the new College to all citizens, with adequate provision for the conduct of its activity in both major languages.

Since Ottawa is not, and will not be primarily an industrial community, the core and focus of a Community College in Ottawa sensibly should differ from that which would be proper in an industrial Ontario community. On the other hand, Ottawa has a range of special needs and a variety of special resources related to the Federal Government Service. Many Government Departments and Agencies would welcome both programme and consultative assistance in all facets of the continuing education of employees at all levels of the public service.

2. The intensive work of our Advisory Committee on Continuing Education, coupled with the experience of our administrative staff and night school principals, clearly indicates to us that there is a need in Ottawa for a very comprehensive institution for continuing education. In using the term comprehensive we do not mean that a new institution should simply offer more



courses within its walls. We mean, in this context, that the new institution should see its responsibility to the learner and its responsibility to the community in a relationship consistent with the very best established principles of continuing education. Present patterns of formal educational opportunity, though venerable, may be redundant. If these new institutions can be freed from existing stereotypes, and can apply talent and breadth of vision to the achievement of flexible and effective new educational patterns of their own, their contribution to the total educational growth and progress of the Province will be immeasurable.

3. This new institution can and should develop new concepts for dealing with the complex problems of learning presented in a rapidly changing society. It should be encouraged to break the bonds of the lock-step progression common to our present high schools, universities, and vocational institutions. Its own programmes and courses should be designed not only to meet the short-term needs of business, industry, the universities, and the secondary school system, but also to meet the long-term needs of individual learners as developing citizens in a complex age. It should encourage short courses for specific needs and should be active in the provision of learning experiences for the citizen as a citizen, not solely as an employee.

Individual courses, programmes, and activities of this new institution should have an intrinsic integrity which is directly related to the satisfaction of community need. The College should not be forced to solicit gratuitous approval from any other institution with vested interests in education.

The new College needs to reflect a concept of excellence related to assisting the learner to develop his talents at various levels, rather than the prevalent confusion which tends to relate excellence in too large measure to high entrance requirements. Graduates of the Colleges will undoubtedly be



welcomed by business, industry, government service, and the universities.

However, if the Colleges see themselves merely as "feeder stations" designed to supply the external demands of these other institutions, their own worth will be severely diminished.

4. There is opportunity for an historically significant development in the field of learning in Ontario through the provision of a College which is primarily a centre of opportunity for all members of the adult community who wish to learn; an institution which operates many programmes outside its own walls, co-operating with community agencies and in community circumstances which will reach out to a much wider range of participants than are even aware of the programmes in our present institutions.

5. Such an institution with these kinds of aims can only grow to full stature on a broad base of community interest, support, and participation. Such growth is dependent upon the extent to which the community can be involved in conceiving and administering the College.

There is now a broad base of support in Ottawa for continuing education. Our own adult programme, coupled with the Ontario Vocational Centre and the Eastern Ontario Institute of Technology, provides a good starting point. This good beginning should not be lost to the new institution.

6. We respectfully suggest that heretofore continuing education has been a marginal activity attached to schools and agencies with prime concerns in other areas. The realization of the full impact of the new Colleges will best be accomplished by establishing continuing education as the central core of their activities. This is particularly true in the Ottawa region with its rich human resources in the public service, national organizations, and the like.



The new College must provide not only staff for formal classrooms and administrative purposes, but also highly-qualified staff to work with community organizations and agencies in the improvement of their own continuing education activities. This "extension" function is of vital significance both to the total programme of the College and to the educational development of the adult community.

7. At the present time in our area there appears to be only a minimum need for transfer programmes to our universities. This need may grow, and in our opinion, such programmes should be developed in response to needs as they arise in the community and as such needs are indicated by the universities.

Another type of "transfer programme" should be a basic part of the College philosophy from the outset. This is the provision for ready transfer within the various components of the College. Programme V students of proven ability should be able to move into the Vocational Centre, vocational students should be able to transfer to E.O.I.T., credit earned at night school courses should be recognized toward achievement at the other component institutions, etc. The provision of a maximum of flexibility for transfer will greatly enhance the worth of the College to the citizen and to the community.

PROPOSED ORGANIZATION:

1. An appointed Board broadly representative of community interests and objectives. This Board should be responsive to the adult learning needs of the total community. It should have autonomy with respect to the policy and progress of this comprehensive institution. Established community agencies and boards now active in the education of adults should be represented.



2. The new institution in the Ottawa region should have a comprehensive and flexible policy and programme. This will best be achieved through the provision of a new Continuing Education Centre and by including and making maximum use of three existing institutions to complete the present College concept.

The Community College in the Ottawa region should include:

(a) A new building complex which would be best located centrally and would include:

- (i) the administrative centre for the College
- (ii) adequate provision for short courses and conferences
- (iii) a full-time community centre for counselling adults
- (iv) classroom space for upgrading and continuing education of an academic nature
- (v) an information and resource centre for adults re community organizations and activities
- (vi) a school of fine arts

(b) The Ontario Vocational Centre

(c) The Eastern Ontario Institute of Technology

(d) The "old" High School of Commerce redesigned and refurnished as a centre for Programme V and as a centre for upgrading the academic skills of the more than 90,000 adults in Ottawa now with an elementary education or less.

In order to maintain the essential flexibility of programme which should be the hallmark of a Community College, all four of these component parts should operate on a year-round basis, day and evening, with a semester, quarter, or 12-week programme base which allows entry and transfer of adult students at a number of times during the year, as well as providing for rapid upgrading progress for keen and highly motivated students.



3. There is an urgent and obvious need for retraining and upgrading vocational-technical skills at all levels of the work force. We recognize that an immediate and essential role of the new College will be to meet this need. However, the achievement of this end is a hollow victory if it is achieved alone. If the citizen is to master the technology rather than the reverse, and if individual lives are to be more than occupation; then upgrading of social, political, and leisure skills is imperative. We, therefore, advocate a College in Ottawa which will integrate rather than separate the community provisions for meeting the learning needs of its citizens.

4. The senior administrative staff of the College should report and be responsible directly to the Board. Each of the four component institutions will have a principal and staff who should report and be responsible to the Board through the administrative staff of the College.

FINANCING:

The method of financing of the new College will be a significant factor in its relationship to the community it is designed to serve.

While maximum use must be made of funds available under the Technical-Vocational Training Agreement, we feel that all concerned have a responsibility to ensure that present sources of funds do not unduly bias the development of the College in the direction of particular kinds of programme activities.

We realize that if such a College is to become a reality in the Ottawa region at an early date, the major share of both capital and operating budget will have to be made available through Provincial and Federal sources. We welcome the generous measure of Provincial support for these new institutions indicated in the legislation and in your public statements about the new Colleges.



However, we hope that in the planning of finances consideration may be given to the idea that some portion of the operating costs should be carried locally in the region. Community understanding of and response to the College will be improved if there is some measure of local financing required.

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The above is submitted for your consideration at this time in the knowledge that your department can take, under the new legislation, a very great step forward toward the recognition in Ontario communities that education can no longer be a terminal activity for any citizen. As Dr. M.M. Coady of Antigonish said so pungently a few years ago, "The man who has ceased to learn ought not to be allowed to wander around loose in these dangerous years."

We believe that in the kind of explosively changing world in which we live, no one can afford the luxury of having an education completed in late adolescence. If we are to cope with the rapidly altering circumstances around us, it will be necessary to gain some understanding of the processes of change.

For these reasons we present this brief in favour of a comprehensive, community-based, flexibly-conceived Community College for the Ottawa region.



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